UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/194
19 August 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 16 August 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request, on behalf of the member States of the European Community, the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I attach an explanatory memorandum (see annex).

(Signed) Robert J. van SCHAIK
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

There has recently been an increasing number of emergencies, man-made and natural, leading to death, devastation and uprooting of an unprecedented number of people. Comprehensive and speedy responses to these emergencies require the active involvement of the United Nations system, since the United Nations and its specialized agencies are in a unique position to mobilize efforts to prevent emergencies, and to respond to them when they occur.

The United Nations system has played an important role during recent emergencies. Nevertheless, it is felt that the effectiveness of this role could be strengthened further by improving the leadership and the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system. The European Council addressed the issues involved in its Declaration of 29 June 1991, in which the Council, inter alia, stated its belief that it is essential to strengthen the coordination mechanisms for emergency actions within the United Nations. This Declaration was circulated as a document of the General Assembly (A/46/288).

A timely discussion on this issue took place during the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council. This discussion deepened the understanding of the different aspects of the response of the international community in general, and of the United Nations system in particular, to emergencies. It has also identified a number of areas where concrete measures could be taken to strengthen the effectiveness of the actions of the United Nations system in this area. We look forward to the report that the Secretary-General will present to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly on this issue.

In view of the importance of the issues involved, and the need to make progress in improving the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to emergency situations, it is proposed to add to the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly a supplementary item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations".

We look forward to the widest possible consultations in order to achieve a satifactory result.